
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Property Address: **1313 11th Street NW**
Landmark/District: **Shaw Historic District**

Meeting Date: **March 7, 2019**
H.P.A. Number: **#19-145**

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The applicant, Lock 7 Development, seeks concept review for construction of a four-story mixed-use building at 1313 11th Street NW. The existing building is a non-contributing property in the Shaw Historic District and would be substantially demolished. Plans were prepared by Square 134 Architects.

Property Description and Context

1313 11th Street NW is part of a row of nine, two-story houses built in 1977. They do not contribute to the character of the Shaw Historic District and exhibit many architectural details not consistent with the historic houses of Shaw. Rather than sitting uniformly on the front property line, the houses are setback from the front property line and alternately staggered. The pattern of unaligned fenestration differs from the aligned fenestration of historic rowhouses. The continuous mansard roofs are disproportionately large and plain compared to historic examples found in Shaw.

Proposal

The applicant proposes to demolish the house at 1313 11th Street and replace it with a four-story rowhouse with a projecting bay. The cornice line of the house would be 50 feet. The façade would align with the front property line with a three-story bay projecting into public space. The front elevation is rendered in brick with an arrangement of windows typical of this type of rowhouse with paired windows in the front of the bay, narrow windows in the bay sides, and a regular alignment of windows above the front entrance. The entrance would be raised above the street to accommodate a raised basement and basement entrance.

Evaluation

While the concept design does not relate or align to its immediate neighbors, it is compatible with the general character of the Shaw Historic District by producing an acceptable contemporary version of a Victorian rowhouse commonly found in the historic district. The concept design satisfies many of the criteria for new construction in a historic district, including scale, materials, massing, roof shape and setback.¹ While this new four-story rowhouse would sit forward of the line of its neighbors and be distinctly taller, this could be considered a temporary incongruity. The existing row of

¹ *New Construction in Historic Districts* (1997), Section 1.2.

houses does not contribute to the character of the historic district and by allowing their development and replacement with new buildings compatible with the character of the historic district, the overall integrity and character of the historic district would be improved.

The street elevations on Sheet PT3.1 illustrate the height of the proposed building in relation to the surrounding context. 1313 11th Street should be especially compared to two items. The row of houses labeled “Existing U.O.N” (1329 through 1337 11th Street) is a group of historic flat-front rowhouses that were built in 1870 as three-story houses on a raised terrace. Eleventh Street has since been regraded lower so that those historic houses now stand 44 feet above grade, but their original proportions were stouter than they appear today. The other comparison is to the building labeled “future development” (currently the surface parking lot at the northeast corner of 11th and N Streets). The rendering shows a by-right building 50 feet tall, but one that is much wider than 1313 11th and so exhibits proportions of a large corner commercial building.

The height of the building proposed for 1313 11th Street should be lowered or moderated to a perceived height consistent with the historic rowhouses of the district. The fourth story is thirteen feet tall floor-to-ceiling while the other floors are about 10 feet. Reducing the height of the fourth story or revising its front façade into a rooftop element like a mansard roof, would produce a compatible building height for a building of this type. If the height of the building is revised, care should be taken not to change the profile of the building. The simple profile of a long, barely sloped roof, absent of any penthouse or setback rooftop structure is paradigmatic of a historic rowhouse.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept to demolish 1313 11th Street NW and build a new four-story, projecting bay rowhouse to be compatible with the character of the historic district, consistent with the purpose of the preservation act, and that final approval be delegated to staff on the condition that the height of the building be lowered or modified as advised by the Board.

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